

Oral history with 70 year old female, Highland, Kentucky (Transcription)

C 44 page 26 The next excerpt is taken from original tape W 117. Begin M22 B(5)

RESPONDENT: ... the beginning of it, old <unintelligible text> come here, and that must have been nineteen and three, or, when he came. And he looked around over the country in different places to find locations to put a school. We didn't have no school, didn't have no church, or nothing. Of course we had a pre-school, but you know that's way back, nothing. And he went on () Creek, and he looked at a place, and he didn't like that. And he come back down here to the mouth of this creek where that hog house is. You know where that is down there where you come up the hollow?

QUESTIONER: Oh yes.

R: Well, now he come back, and looked in that bottom out there. That belonged to my uncle, <unintelligible text>. And they rode over that bottom, old <unintelligible text> from Alabama and <unintelligible text> and his daughter <unintelligible text> from Willmore, Kentucky. And I was up behind <unintelligible text>. She was riding the horse of my daddy's. and I was up behind her, a little black-haired girl. Had on a red calico dress, red and black. (laughs) That checked calico dress I can recall if it was yesterday. And they rode over that bottom and looked at it, and it was a nice location. But they decided it was under the high water mark. And they wouldn't put it there. They might have put it there if it hadn't have been for that. Well, my father was named <unintelligible text> And old <unintelligible text> called him <unintelligible text> all the time. And my mother was named

Library of Congress

<unintelligible text> called her <unintelligible text>. He said we go back up the creek, up to <unintelligible text> and said if you give

C 44 page 27

us this little valley out here, he said we'll build a school here. And we come back up from my home, right down here where () lived, only it's a different building, and they got down and come in, stayed awhile. Well, there, that was where they put their headquarters. My father's was the headquarters. For these people had all come into the mountains to see about the schools and all the work. He took care of them all. he fed them, and he let (). Now we had to go up a holler down here at Three Miles to Fort Oakdale, and had to go on horses or take a wagon, to bring them in, old <unintelligible text> and his workers, when they come in here to locate the school and work. And they come back to my home down there, and they talked to my daddy. I, see I knowed what my daddy would do. When <unintelligible text> said we go back to <unintelligible text>s and see what he'll do. Well, I know what <unintelligible text> would do because he was so anxious to have that school, 'cause we didn't have none. And we didn't have no church. And he come back, up and they talked it all over. And Daddy told him what he'd do. But in the meantime, now, my Grandfather () was a-living. And he was old. And my daddy inherited this land from him. It was gived to him. My daddy wanted his father to have the honor and the glory for giving it. So they sent for him. And he come up. And of course, he was anxious to do that. And so now this, all this was given, that was my father's down there. But he wanted my <unintelligible text> to have () because he was the one it Was handed down from.

Q: What was his first name? Your grandfather.

R: My grandfather? Richard Harrel. And my father's name was

Library of Congress

C 44 page 27

<unintelligible text>. Well, they just made them be right now there. And they made deeds and they got that all started right at once And they just come in in loads, now, from the railroad. We had to have them come in by railroad. And they come down in this holler right down here where you passed up by (), and they had to come in on horseback or wagons. And that's the way they let them. And now my daddy done all the transportation. He furnished everything. He furnished the first workers that ever come after they got it started was <unintelligible text> from Texas, and <unintelligible text> (), was from Henderson, Kentucky. Them two ladies come and they stayed with us. We give them one room in our house. We had a big attic upstairs, and a kitchen and a dining room, and another big room and a hall. Well, these two ladies occupied one room. Stayed in it. And we fed them and they stayed there. And we had Sunday school, church in that room, too. I mean we didn't have no church. We had Sunday school Well, when the weather got warmed-up, there was a big tree down in yonder campus. I big beech tree. They moved out down there and they taught school underneath that tree. And I was one of the tree gals and went to school. (laughs) And finally they got a little cottage built up from Mr. (), up where you come out from (), that cement rock that they did with the () there. Boys' dormitory was there where the girls' dormitory was. But now, a little cottage was built there, two rooms. And a long side room for a kitchen and dining room. And after <unintelligible text>, she left here, and <unintelligible text> come. But I have forgot where <unintelligible text> was from. And her and <unintelligible text> now worked down there for quite a while. And they

C 44 page 28

eventually got the school building done. They first built the cottage. And then they got the school building done. Well, of course they dedicated that school building, and everybody had a big time, and the more people, you never did see so many people in your life,

Library of Congress

horses and buggies and sleds and wagons and all that. Up and down that creek, that little valley down there was, everthing was full of people.

Q: Do you have any idea of how many people lived around here?

R: Ma'am?

Q: Do you know about how many people lived around here?

R: Around here then? Why, they was quite a few people now. They was all up this creek. They was mostly () that lived up this creek. Now nobody lived where I'm-living now. This was just a field. There was one house out there. And on up the creek they was quite a few (), and different people lived up there. Then we lived, my father lived right down here at this, over from that two-story building, and on down the creek, my brother lived. And then my grandfather <unintelligible text> lived down where Mr. ()?

Q: <unintelligible text>

R: Yes, that one.

Q: Yeah, I know who that is.

R: My <unintelligible text> lived there, but that wasn't the house. That house burnt. And then eventually they brought Mister, let's see now, who did he come here, the first man, the first principal, I mean professor, they called him? Well a man by the name of <unintelligible text>, and him and his wife came. And they had another

C 44 page 29

cottage built then by the school building. And they lived there. And then when they did get the school a-going and they was a-taking in students, they had between the fountain there, and at this end of campus where the fence is, they had, I'll show you where they cooked and eat, since I ain't ...

Q: Oh, pictures!

R; Let me see now if I can find that.

Q: OK.

R: I'll get off of my track here telling you things.

Q: Oh, that's alright.

R: I can try to show you some things about this here album if I can ...

Q: OK. That's good.

R: I'm. going to show you the picture of the little house where they had for their, the thirteen boys stayed upstairs and four girls stayed in one room, and <unintelligible text> and his wife and son stayed in the other room. Let's see if I can find that before I forget.

Library of Congress

These pictures are all concerning the school. Back a long time ago it's been. And they, the picture of this house now, they built this for the dormitory and a place to eat. They didn't have no dormitory then. That's Miss (), a lady who used to work down here Twenty years old when she come down here. And they was, upstairs they was a attic, and they kept thirteen boys up there, and they was two big rooms, just like this, now. Four girls stayed in this room, and <unintelligible text> and <unintelligible text> and their son stayed in the other room. And on

C 44 page 30

the side was built a long, a long building that they cooked and eat in. And I've got it here if I can find it, the picture of it. And of course when they got that school building done, why that had more to do with it. They went to building dormitories and they built two dormitories. They built the girls' dormitory and the boys' dormitory.

Q: How much land were they given originally?

R: Well. I'll tell you all the land they bought is where the rock building sit. The other was gift. All that was gift. Gived to them. They was four or six acres of it, and I don't remember just which. But that was gived to them, the land was gived to them. Donated to them. And my father gived all the timber in the hills that built the first school building now that burnt. And he give all the coal that they burnt for the first two or three years. And it was hard to get and (). And then they got to getting it other places. And he put money in the school building. I don't remember just how much he put in, but he put in quite a bit. And all the land that they bought down there where the school is now, and that campus, is where the rock building is there. Now after my father died, that was a land that belonged to my mother. That piece of land did, and <unintelligible text>, right here he is, <unintelligible text>, that's him and his wife and his son over at the rock building there, and he come up

Library of Congress

one evening and he told her that he had some friends in South Carolina, that they wanted to build an orphanage there. And if they could get a piece of land to move it, that they would help with it. And he told her that that was our'n and that she

C 44 page 31

didn't particularly need it and he said it'd be a help to the community and to children. And he said we don't want you to give it to us. She was left a widow, you see, with us children, he said that we'll pay you for it. And he told her. She asked him what she'd take. Well, she told him I think it ought to be worth a thousand dollars. Oh, he said we'll gladly give you a thousand. And she said now, I want to give back a hundred of that on the building. Well, she said furthermore, she said, you go across where those cabins are up there in that holler, and if you can find rock for to put that building up, she said, that's on my land, you get your men and go on down and quarry it out. And they did. She gived all the stone that built that rock building. My (). After my daddy was a-gone.

Q: When did he die?

R: My daddy?

Q: Yeah.

R: He died in 1912. 1912. He lived about, let's see. I thing that school was founded in about nineteen-three. That'd be about seven, eight, or nine years after the school was built. But because that was his whole heart's desire, that school. And he sure was carried away with it, and he died in 1912 and she died in twenty-five. Now, you know, you can ask me questions. I can't remember everything.

Library of Congress

Q; Were there other local people who contributed land? Or was it just your family?

R: All the, it was just my family. Just my own parents. Now this land belonged to my daddy. But, it was handed down from

C 44 page 32

him, from his father to him. And his father was real old. And he said I want Daddy to have all the glory for this. So, they sent and got him. And <unintelligible text> was the man that done turn it over. He wanted him to do that. And, yeah, we, just local people, they's just a lot of things, but I forgot a lot about it. But one thing about it is there was a lot of people who come around here that we would have never knowed or never seen if it hadn't been for the school. And there's been a many a child who got a high school education that couldn't have got it at that time. Of course they can get it now. They don't have no trouble now. But at that time, times was very hard. I know people that, children that come in from other states, North Carolina, Tennessee and different places ...

Q: And came here.

R: Yeah. Went to school down there. I know there was a girl by the name ... I used to work down there at the school. I used to cook. I cooked when <unintelligible text> and <unintelligible text> was there, I did. And when the <unintelligible text> were there. Mr. and Miss (). And of course I grew up there. I don't, obviously that's all I know. And I know a lot about it. But you know how it is. I forget things. And of course there been quite a few workers that come in there, come and go, and stay and ... A lot of people lived sown there that's gone now. That lived around there's gone. Worked for the school and ...

Library of Congress

Q: How many children were there the first year? Do you remember?

R: The first year?

Q: About how many?

C 44 page 33

R: You mean when the school first opened?

Q: When the school first started.

R; Now when they first started, they weren't but just a few children coming. Was starting in my house, in my father's house. In one room. And they weren't but just a few. But of course it grew and grew. It got bigger all the time. I don't, right off I couldn't say, but I'll say there was seventy-five.

Q; At the start? Well, that's quite a few.

R: Yeah, well, I'd say there was that many. See, well, it was a great excitement in the country. And most of the people in this part of the country called it a college. (laughs)

Q: They did? It looks like a college.

Library of Congress

R: And they'd say they were going to send them to college at (). I'll tell you right off that there was that many in a year's time.

Q: Oh my.

R: And of course it just grew and grew. And they come from different states. And these children walked several miles to come to school. They sure did, crossing hills, where you come off 13 coming down to (), now down that road they was lots of children coming across the hill right out there. And down here at the school. I don't know how many families it was. They's <unintelligible text> and <unintelligible text> I just don't remember.

Q: Yeah, that's pretty good.

R: They's quite a few. They was a lot of workers different months come in here. Oh, I just couldn't name them. The first ones, well, I remember the first ones that came was <unintelligible text>